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**MILESTONE: Enrollment tops 100,000 in state prepaid tuition plan**  
*Enrollment up 21% this year; deadline for new accounts is March 31*

**OLYMPIA** – A record enrollment year in Washington's prepaid college tuition plan shows parents are eager to find a secure way to save for college. Today state officials **confirmed the 100,000<sup>th</sup> enrollment in the nation's fastest growing prepaid tuition plan.**

New accounts are up 21 percent over last year, with just days left until the March 31 enrollment deadline, according to Betty Lochner, director of Washington's Guaranteed Education Tuition Program, or GET. "No other college savings vehicle can guarantee that your money will keep pace with rising college tuition," said Lochner. "Parents who save with GET have peace of mind knowing their savings won't lose value in today's volatile market."

GET accounts grow tax-free and no tax is paid when money is used for tuition, room and board or other qualified college expenses. Lochner believes that interest in GET will continue to grow as parents appreciate the guaranteed increase in value offered. "Families with young children who will go to college can save a lot with GET," said Lochner. Tuition units purchased just ten years ago have seen a 77 percent return.

GET allows families to prepay for future college tuition, with 100 GET units equal to one year of undergraduate tuition and required state fees at the most expensive public university in Washington. The state of Washington guarantees that if families buy one year of tuition, or 100 GET units, they'll have one year of college tuition when their children are ready for college, regardless of how much tuition has increased over time.

"If tuition continues to climb annually at an average of 7 percent or more, a family with a newborn can expect to pay more than \$100,000 for four years of college at the University of Washington or Washington State University," said Lochner.

Although the value of GET units is tied to state public undergraduate tuition and required state fees, students can use their GET accounts at nearly any public or private college, university or vocational school in the country. If a student attends a less expensive school, his

units would stretch further. At a more costly out-of-state or private school, the family would pay the difference.

If the student doesn't go to college, the account owner can transfer the funds to a family member or request a refund. Anyone – parents, grandparents, or friends – can contribute to a student's account. Parents can open an account with a lump sum, or with a payment plan as low as \$34 per month. "The younger your child, the more time you have to save, and the more you'll be able to save," said Lochner.

**The cost this year for one GET unit is \$76, a price valid only through March 31, when enrollment for the year closes.** Existing accounts can still add units at that price until April 30, but beginning May 1 the unit price will be higher. Lochner said the program works hard to keep the cost of GET units affordable.

To date, more than 13,000 students have used their accounts at colleges in all 50 states and five foreign countries. Since the program began in 1998, Washington families have opened over 100,000 accounts worth \$1 billion.

GET's annual enrollment period ends March 31, 2009. To learn more about the GET program or to enroll by the March 31 deadline, go online at [www.get.wa.gov](http://www.get.wa.gov) or call 1-800-955-2318 (toll-free).

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*Washington's Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program is our state's 529 prepaid tuition plan. With a guarantee backed by state law, tax benefits, flexible payments and a nationwide choice of colleges, GET helps families save for college.*